



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES LATEST INVESTMENTS FOR AT RISK YOUTH**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) and Thrive Chicago announced the City's latest investments to reconnect young people back to school and jobs today. Funding for Choose to Change program and Neighborhood Reconnection Hubs will offer a unique new approach to serving Chicago's most at risk youth.

Here's what people are saying about the latest investments:

"An Opportunity Fair is a great vehicle to connect youth with employers that will provide them with viable job access. We are excited to bring such an opportunity to Englewood. It is a valuable resource for this age group."

—Perry Gunn, Teamwork Englewood

"I am very excited that Phalanx Family Services will launch the City's First Reconnection Hub in the Roseland Community. This opportunity will support Youth as our agency help them dream big and realize those dreams for education and career pathways all while reducing barriers that impede employment."

—Tina Sanders, Phalanx Family Services

"For youth who may have given up on finding work or a future, the Reconnection Hub will provide access to hope, jobs and support. We at Metropolitan are excited to partner with Thrive Chicago and our network partners in Roseland to help financially empower youth, families and communities. We applaud the city for this important investment in our future."

—Ricardo Estrada, President & CEO, Metropolitan Family Services

"We are thrilled that the Mayor and the people of the City of Chicago continue to invest in our young men and women through the Mayor's Mentoring Initiative. We share their commitment of investing in our youth because we know that with the right supports in place, our youth will thrive and have the tools they need to be their best selves."

—AJ Watson, National Becoming a Man Director, Youth Guidance

“As a Chicago Police Officer for 30 years now, I firmly believe that someone with no hope is someone who may be willing to pick up a gun and use it. While I am proud of my officers work to reduce gun violence for fourteen straight months, to achieve long-lasting public safety we must make the right investments that will give hope to young people in some of our most historically challenged neighborhoods. That is why I am thankful to Mayor Emanuel, DFSS, and Thrive Chicago for investing in the future of young Chicagoans to show them that we believe in their potential and give them the hope that they desperately need.”

—Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson

“Keeping students safe and propelling them on a successful path starts with a quality education bolstered by investments in programs like Choose to Change and Reconnection Hubs that give our youth the extra support they need. As a lifelong educator, I know that quality out-of-school programming fosters skills that help support student well-being and opportunities for the future, and I thank Mayor Emanuel for continuing to invest in these critical programs.”

—CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson.

“Skills for Chicagoland’s Future is proud to join a citywide campaign to advance solutions for getting our Opportunity Youth connected back to work. Through our Pivot to Success program, we commit to do our part in connecting youth with employment opportunities with our business partners.”

—Marie Lynch, Skills for Chicagoland’s Future

“We at SER work with opportunity youth to give hope, to empower young adults to succeed and make a positive impact in our communities.”

—Guadalupe Preston, Central States SER

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